

Michael Mason

From: Jacqueline Muehlbauer <naturegal64@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 25, 2025 8:35 AM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: Support for HB 69: Enhancing Alaska's Education Funding

Dear Members of the Alaska State Legislature Education Committees,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 69, which aims to increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for Alaska's public education system. As a resident of Fairbanks and a parent of children attending Pearl Creek Elementary School, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges our schools face due to insufficient funding.

The current BSA has not kept pace with inflation and the rising costs of education, leading to larger class sizes, reduced programs, and the potential closure of neighborhood schools like Pearl Creek. Increasing the BSA is essential to provide our students with the quality education they deserve and to maintain the vitality of our communities.

Pearl Creek Elementary is a cornerstone of our community, known for its academic excellence, unique outdoor learning opportunities, and strong community involvement. The potential closure of such schools not only disrupts students' education but also diminishes the attractiveness of our community to prospective families and businesses.

By supporting HB 69, you will be investing in the future of Alaska's children and the overall well-being of our state. I urge you to prioritize this legislation and work towards its swift passage.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Muehlbauer

1540 Farmers Loop Rd

Fairbanks, AK 99709

naturegal64@gmail.com

907.415.9081

Michael Mason

From: Jacqueline Muehlbauer <naturegal64@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 5, 2025 8:52 AM
To: Senate Education; House Education
Subject: Closing Schools

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to urge you to **pass HB 69**, a bill that is critical for ensuring that Alaska's education system remains **competitive, innovative, and responsive to the needs of families**. Last night, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School Board voted to **close Pearl Creek and two other schools**, a decision that could have been avoided if the district had the resources and flexibility to **pursue alternative models like magnet and FOCUS schools**.

My family moved to Fairbanks from Arizona, where we saw firsthand what happens when schools close without alternative models in place. Instead of **increasing choices for families**, school closures eliminated viable options, forcing parents into **a narrow system with fewer educational pathways**. We believed Alaska was different—that **our leaders valued school choice in all its forms**. But last night, Fairbanks **rejected innovation** when it could have **expanded educational opportunities**.

HB 69 is an opportunity to change that.

This legislation would **increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA) and provide districts with the funding stability they need** to develop **high-quality magnet and FOCUS schools, strengthen specialized programs, and create competitive educational options that retain and attract families**. Instead of being forced into **a cycle of closures and shrinking opportunities**, districts could **expand school choice through dynamic, student-centered models**.

Without HB 69, we will continue to see **school closures year after year**, not because families don't want these schools, but because districts don't have the funding or flexibility to **innovate and keep pace with changing educational demands**.

Last night's vote in Fairbanks is a warning sign. **Without bold action from the legislature, more communities will face the same devastating losses**. Passing HB 69 isn't just about keeping schools open—it's about **giving districts the ability to create competitive, high-quality educational models that meet the needs of every student**.

Governor Dunleavy has made **school choice a priority**, and we agree—but **true school choice means having a diverse set of high-quality options, including magnet schools, specialized programs, and innovative learning environments**. HB 69 provides the foundation to **make that vision a reality**.

I urge you to **act now and pass HB 69** to prevent more unnecessary closures, to expand opportunities for students, and to ensure that **Alaska remains a place where families have real choices in education**.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Muehlbauer

Michael Mason

From: Jaime Roth <waterfal29@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 10:20 AM
To: house.education@akle.gov; Senate Education
Subject: Support HB 69

My name is Jaime Roth. I am parent in Homer and the Head Coach for the Kachemak Swim Club. I am in support of HB 69 so we can keep our pool open and not increase classrooms and lose theatre opportunities. Funding education should be near the top of the list of our government's priorities.

Thank you!
Jaime Roth
Head Coach
Kachemak Swim Club
kachemakswimclub.headcoach@gmail.com

To: Senate Education Committee: Chair Tobin, Vice-Chair Stevens, Members Bjorkman, Kiehl, Cronk,
Re: Testimony in support of Funding: Increasing the BSA for Alaska's Public Schools

My name is Jamie Rodriguez and I'm writing from Anchorage in support of proper funding of public education. As a former ASD teacher for 30 years and now retired, public education is in my blood and I've witnessed and been a part of endless amazing moments. I'm a firm believer in public education and believe that it's an open door to opportunity that must be preserved and protected. The passage of a bill that gets this done is essential. Period.

I was very pleased to see HB69 pre-filed so not a moment is wasted in getting this needed bill up and running and our now sorely starved public school system back on track. A HUGE thank you to our two majority caucuses and your firm commitment to working together to support our state and its diverse communities. Thus far, HB69, which I realize is just getting started and hasn't reached the Senate yet, addresses one of the most important ingredients needed to keep Alaska strong and vibrant, that of properly funding public education.

Education is one of the key pillars in building and maintaining a strong, vibrant community and economy for all to succeed and thrive, to grow families, to build and attract new businesses, to attract people who come as students or tourists and decide to stay on, and to young families who want to grow with the state and be a part of building a continued modern and vibrant future for current and future generations.

If we want Alaska to be successful, we must attend to our public education. Together with affordable healthcare and housing, a fully funded public education system, they create the building blocks for a strong foundation for building Alaska's future. Sadly, due to the ongoing blockage and refusal to fund and keep these foundations strong, our pillars are beginning to crumble and will continue to do so if blocked at every juncture.

Instead the opposition is making false accusations and unwarranted claims that "our public schools failing." The continual threats, the cuts and endless starvation level funding/defunding "until the public schools do better," and choking/starving our schools until they see some mythological evidence of improvement. They're abusing the system and that's unconscionable.

All of this when real life evidence shows that increased spending on education leads to better student outcomes. In short, with proper funding to close the gaps, we can end overcrowded classrooms, students will get more attention when there aren't up to forty kids in a classroom, and we won't have to close down schools across the state, and watch buildings deteriorate.

Maintaining a healthy Public School System is just like maintaining, one's home or car, and everything else in this life. If ignored, your infrastructure will begin to deteriorate and cost more to maintain in the long run.

I urge each of you to stand up for education and vote to properly maintain our public education system. It's in the Alaska State Constitution and as noted in **Article 7, Section 1, of the Alaska Constitution, "No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution."**

The children we care for now are the adults that will be caring for all of us later. Please make the investment and vote for Alaska and her future. We can do this! Let's get it done this round.

Thank you!
Jamie Rodriguez, HD9 Anchorage

Michael Mason

From: Jan Cawvey <janandvon@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2025 4:26 PM
Cc: Jan Cawvey
Subject: Support for HB 69 and increase of BSA statewide school funding
Importance: High

Senate Education and House Education Committee Members,

We are writing **in support of HB 69 and an increase to the BSA for statewide school funding and the need to pass this quickly so that funding can go to school districts prior to the need for staff and program cuts.**

ASD is currently putting an unfair burden of proposed teacher cuts on O'Malley Elementary School and the French Immersion Program due to the budget deficit. We currently have a grandson in kindergarten in the French Immersion Program at O'Malley. O'Malley Elementary (both the neighborhood program and the French Immersion Program) have created such a warm, inviting, and supportive academic community. Tearing this apart would be tragic for all parties involved. Parents are tired of the Immersion Programs being on the chopping block every few years; its disruptive and stressful for teachers and students alike to go through this cycle so often.

The current proposed ASD budget will cut 5 teachers from O'Malley Elementary, reducing the staff from 17 to 12 - more than any other school in the district. Such disproportionate cuts will severely impact the quality of education and overall student experience at this school. With only 12 teachers, there is no way that a neighborhood program and immersion program can coexist at O'Malley without having 52 kids in an immersion class - which is not manageable for a single teacher. **Immersion programs take long term planning to recruit bilingual educators, often requiring international hiring and visa approvals to have native or near native speakers. This is not something that can be easily reinstated if the immersion programs are accommodated at the last minute if the state happens to approve more funding this spring/summer.**

About half of the current students enrolled in the French Immersion Program are not zoned for O'Malley Elementary. If the immersion program is dismantled, most likely those kids would go back to their neighborhood schools, severely lowering the population at O'Malley and effectively putting the school on the chopping block for closure in the next few years. This will create another cycle of uncertainty and upheaval for the students and staff alike.

Immersion programs offer many benefits to students not only academically (improved performance, better reading comprehension, enhanced cognitive development, better memory, problem-solving skills, and attention control) but socially (enhanced communication skills and a better understanding and respect of other cultures).

Our children grew up in the Anchorage School District and attended Huffman Elementary, Goldenvue Middle School and Service High School/South Anchorage High School. ASD was a thriving school district when our daughter, Jessica Cawvey Stine, attended, helping her develop the skills she uses to work in our community. Jessica and her husband, Eli, were excited to move back to Anchorage to raise their sons here and were thrilled that ASD had created such a robust Immersion Program offering so many languages. Their friends and family in the Lower 48 have all

been impressed that a school district in Alaska can provide such an extensive immersion program. We fear that by cutting things like the Immersion Programs that make our school district unique, ASD is doing a huge disservice to the Anchorage community and Alaska's economy. Alaska is currently experiencing a population exodus - 28% of the workforce works remotely outside of Alaska. Folks are moving out of state to find better school districts. Jessica works for a small, locally owned architecture business, and the owner told her she's considering buying a house in Seattle so her kids can go to school there. We also have an aging population that is retiring out of the workforce. How is Anchorage supposed to attract young families and new talent when ASD is failing our children? Are the doctors you need going to be here when no one with young kids wants to move here? How are you going to recruit new teachers when there is no job stability and they must go through a layoff cycle every year?

Please consider the long-term ramifications that severe cuts like this will have on our community and state.

We have written to the school board requesting they reinstate the 5 teaching positions at O'Malley Elementary and allowing the French Immersion Program to continue. **Please help create a better future for our kids by increasing the BSA so that amazing programs like French Immersion can continue and our grandchildren can have the excellent education that they deserve.**

Sincerest thanks,

Jan and Von

Jan and James (Von) Cawvey

Grandparents of an ASD Student at

O'Malley Elementary/French Immersion Program

Michael Mason

From: Janice Banta <jbanta@me.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 3:30 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Cathy Giessel
Subject: HB 69

Members of the State of Alaska House Education Committee,

Please enter my strong support in the record for HB 69, which will provide an increase in the Base Student Allocation for Alaskan public schools by \$1,808 spread over the next three years (\$1,000 FY 2026, \$404 FYs 2027 and 2028). This increase is far, far overdue. Over the last decade or more we have witnessed the negative impacts of school funding that has not kept up with inflation. The result? Trained teachers fleeing the profession (especially since they no longer get defined benefit pensions, which will also hopefully be addressed in this year's session) overcrowded classrooms, and outmigration as families seek communities that provide better educational and other services for their children.

As a former educator in the Anchorage School District, I'm so distressed to see the effects of underfunding for schools on students and school staff. This is a critical moment to turn these negative trends around and rebuild our communities. Please do everything in your power to ensure a veto proof passage of this important bill.

Sincerely,

Janice A. Banta
Anchorage, AK

Michael Mason

From: Jasmine Maurer <jazmaurer@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2025 10:42 AM
To: Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Senate Education; Rep. Sarah Vance; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Bill Elam; Rep. Bryce Edgmon
Subject: Vote yes for education funding (on HB 69)

Hello,

I am writing to voicemail met support of HB 69 and similar education funding proposals that will increase base student allocation in the house and senate and tie the BSA formula to inflation to avoid future volatility.

Please fund our public school system for our students today and tomorrow.

As a family with two working parents to support our families needs and well being having quality public education makes a huge impact on our lives. I want to know my children are safe, receiving quality education, have opportunities to explore extracurricular activities and being challenges to reach their potential and grow into positive contributing citizens.

Thank you for voting yes on HB 69 and similar education funding bills

Jasmine

Michael Mason

From: Jasmine Maurer <jazmaurer@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 9:16 PM
Subject: Move HB69 forward & vote yes

Please do your part, all you can do, to move HB 69 forward and get it passed.

This bill is crucial to support the educators in our communities to keep quality education intact for our students to have functioning school systems with healthy environments and not the stress of not knowing what building they will be in next year, if they will have jobs.

We have four school age children and they all love school, are learning so much, and feel so supported by their school community, teachers, staff and classmates. They get the individual attention they need because class sizes are 18-25, not overwhelmingly large. They get to participate in music and art and PE and afterschool clubs and activities. These are the opportunities young learners need to grow to explore to develop into well balanced skilled adults ready to pursue careers or secondary education.

I fear without stable funding for schools Alaska will continue to see families moving to other states (I know there are many factors that go into this - and schools are an important piece).

Move HB69 forward and vote yes!

Thank you for supporting our children and their educational environment to be the best it can be by voting yes on HB 69

Jasmine

Michael Mason

From: Jasmine Maurer <jazmaurer@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 4, 2025 9:53 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 82

I'm writing to add additional comments to my comment in opposition of HB 83. HB 82 falls short of meeting Alaskans need to have a stable predictable school funding structure.

We have seen that when schools are not open, like during the 2020 pandemic, the burden on families is immense and leads to deterioration of mental health and decreased academic success in students of all ages. Closing schools, increasing class sizes, burdening families with education when parents are working is not sustainable and will lead to a less competitive society with decreased productivity and innovation.

Fully fund our schools by supporting and passing HB 69

Jasmine Maurer

Michael Mason

From: Jen Gunderson <jen.gunder@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 3:20 PM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: HB 69 Written Testimony

My name is Jen Gunderson, and I reside in Fairbanks. I have two children who attend neighborhood schools.

Our interior schools are facing a sharp decline in quality due to a sustained lack of funding. In the past 3 years, our district has closed four schools. This year, we will likely close an additional five schools. Our class sizes have steadily increased (see data on elementary class sizes [here](#)). Notably, 18% of our kindergarten classes are over the target PTR, with class sizes up to 29 without aides. Imagine trying to manage and educate 29 5-year-olds. It's an impossible task. We have buildings with tens of millions of dollars of deferred maintenance. We no longer have band and orchestra in elementary. We no longer have art in elementary. Even if we close five schools this year, our district will still have a \$6 million deficit. What is left to cut? And what will happen in the next few years if we continue to have enormous deficits? How will we remain solvent?

You have a constitutional duty to fund public schools. It is the law. Please do your jobs and increase our funding permanently. Give our school district stability and the resources it needs to provide an excellent, equitable education that we can all be proud of.

Sincerely,
Jen Gunderson

Michael Mason

From: Jennifer Swick <jrswick14@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 3, 2025 1:03 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Education funding

Good Afternoon,

My name is Jen, I was born and raised in Seldovia and am now currently raising my own family here. My oldest son is in first grade and attends Susan B English. He is one of about 20 kids enrolled there when there should be over 50. Last year there was a series of unfortunate events regarding staffing that lead a lot of parents to opt for the stability of homeschool instead of keeping them in the school, and things haven't really gotten back on track since.

There is a desire of families to return but most are unwilling to make the commitment if they do not know what they are returning to. Will their kids have a teacher? Will that teacher be qualified? Will that teacher stick around? We did not have teaching staff hired until July of last year. July! That is unacceptable. We also knew that this staff was only sticking around for a year so we would be faced with another entire staff turnover this year. We were hoping to get a jump start on things to hopefully hire in a timely fashion and secure some good teachers, but everything is getting pushed because of questionable funding. Please do what you can to increase education funding and do it quickly! I won't pretend to know the ins and outs of politics, but I do know that continuing to kick the can down the road and make schools limp by is harming the schools and the communities.

Without a school in Seldovia, the town will crumble. Families will be left with no option but to move, taking with them businesses, workers, and volunteers who keep this town afloat. Again, please do what you can to ensure that does not happen by funding our schools to keep our communities alive.

Thank you for your time.

Jen Swick
Seldovia, AK
907-202-1648

Michael Mason

From: Jennifer Elliot <jennifer.elliott@k21schools.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 4:52 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69

Hello,

I am writing as a mother of students as well as an educator in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District. I am writing to implore you-BEG really-to pass HB 69, which will increase the Base Student Allocation. We DESPERATELY need this funding. We have already cut so many programs and classes that our students need in order to be successful when they leave our highschool as graduates. With these programs cut, more families are leaving our public schools and with less students, we are receiving less funding, which creates a circular problem. With the flat funding we have received in years past, we have already lost so much, and are slated to lose more this spring. We are looking at losing neighborhood schools, or losing our electives for students. This is not a quality solution, but we have no choice. Please, please, please, pass BH 69!!!!

Thank you, Jennifer Elliot, Mother of students and Kindergarten Teacher

Michael Mason

From: Jess Stine <jessstine.ak@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2025 11:59 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for HB 69 / Education Funding

Hello Senate Education Committee,

I'm writing in support of HB 69 and an increase to the BSA for statewide school funding and to pass this quickly so that funding can go to districts.

ASD is currently putting an unfair burden of teacher cuts to O'Malley Elementary School and the French Immersion Program due to the budget deficit. I currently have a kindergartener in the French Immersion Program at O'Malley. O'Malley Elementary (both the neighborhood program and the French Program) have created such a warm, inviting, and supportive academic community. Tearing this apart would be tragic for all parties involved. Parents are tired of Immersion being on the chopping block every few years, its disruptive and stressful for teachers and students alike to go through this limbo cycle so often.

The ASD budget is currently proposing to cut 5 teachers from O'Malley reducing the staff from 17 to 12, more than any other school in the district. Such disproportionate cuts will severely impact the quality of education and overall student experience at the school. With only 12 teachers, there is no way that a neighborhood program and immersion program can coexist at O'Malley without having 52 kids in an immersion class which is not manageable for a single teacher. Immersion programs take long term planning to recruit bilingual educators, require international hiring and visa approvals to have native or near native speakers. This is not something that can be easily reinstated if its dissolved or accommodated at the last minute if the state happens to approve more funding in the spring/summer.

About ½ of the current students enrolled in the French Immersion Program are not zoned for O'Malley. If the immersion program is dismantled, most likely those kids would go back to their neighborhood schools which would severely lower the population at O'Malley and effectively put the school on the chopping block to be closed in the next few years, creating another cycle of uncertainty and upheaval for the students and staff alike.

Immersion programs offer many benefits to students not only academically (improved performance, better reading comprehension and enhanced cognitive development including better memory, problem-solving skills and attention control) and socially (enhanced communication skills) but also gives them a better understanding and respect of other cultures.

I grew up in the Anchorage School District and attended Huffman Elementary, Goldenvue Middle School and Service High School. ASD was a thriving school district when I attended, helping me develop the skills I use to work in our community. My husband and I were excited to move back to Anchorage to raise our kids here and were thrilled that ASD had created such a robust Immersion program offering so many languages. Our friends and family in the Lower 48 have all been impressed that a school district in Alaska has the ability to provide such an extensive immersion program. I fear that by cutting things like Immersion that make our school district unique, ASD is doing a huge disservice to the Anchorage community and Alaska economy as a whole. Alaska is currently experiencing a population exodus. 28% of the workforce works remotely. Folks are moving out of state to better school districts - I work for a small, locally owned business and the owner told me today she's considering buying a house in Seattle so her kids can go to school there. We also have an aging population that is retiring out of the workforce. How is Anchorage supposed to attract young families and new talent when ASD is failing our children? Is the doctor you need going to be here when no one with young kids wants to move here? How are you going to

recruit new teachers when there is no job stability, and they must go through a layoff cycle every year? Please consider the long-term ramifications that severe cuts like this will have on our community and state.

I have written to the school board requesting they reinstate the 5 teaching positions back to O'Malley Elementary and allowing the French Immersion Program to continue. Please help create a better future for our kids by increasing the BSA so that amazing programs like French Immersion can continue and our kids can have the excellent education that they deserve.

Thank you,
Jess Stine

Michael Mason

From: Jessica Simonsen <jessica.simonsen@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 5, 2025 11:27 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: House Bill 69

Dear Alaska Senate Education Committee Members,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my strong support for the passage of House Bill 69 (HB69), which would increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for our public schools. As a concerned resident of the Anchorage School District, I urge you to prioritize this legislation in order to address the ongoing challenges our district and students face.

Over the last two years, our district has been forced to close elementary schools due to insufficient funding from the state. This has had a profound impact on the entire community. Families have had to adjust to longer commutes, overcrowded classrooms, and diminished access to vital educational resources. The closures have strained our teachers, staff, and students, creating a ripple effect that extends beyond the classroom. The lack of adequate funding has placed our children's education—and the future of our community—at risk.

Increasing the Base Student Allocation through HB69 is critical to reversing this trend. This bill will provide the necessary resources for our schools to maintain smaller class sizes, offer more comprehensive educational programs, and ensure that our children have the quality education they deserve. It will also help prevent further school closures and support the sustainability of our local schools.

I urge you to stand with our students, educators, and families by supporting HB69. Our children's education is the foundation upon which our community's future will be built, and this bill represents a crucial step toward strengthening that foundation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing of your support for HB69

Jessica Simonsen
Alaskan Parent of students

Michael Mason

From: Joan Stassel <jstassel@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2025 10:14 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please support HB69

Dear Honorable Senators of the Education committee,

I am writing to ask you to please support HB69 to increase the student BSA. Our school system is suffering from lack of funding in many areas which is resulting in declining test scores, parents moving out of public schools for other options, building maintenance deferred, and teacher retention issues, and even outmigration from AK by families discouraged with the state education system!! This is NOT the Alaska we all want and NOT the Anchorage in which I grew up in during the 60s and 70s, (when West High had very good test scores and national Rhodes Scholars!)

Please vote to increase the student BSA! And then we need to follow up with good oversight to ensure the money is spent wisely and efficiently.

Very sincerely,

Joan Stassel
Anchorage, AK



LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 32089 · Mountain Village, Alaska 99632

Phone: (907) 591-2411

www.lysd.org

George Smith
Chairman

John Hargis
Superintendent

Subject: Support for HB69: Investing in Alaska's Students and Future

Dear Members of the House and Senate Education Committees,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB69 and to encourage the Legislature to focus on increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA). Predictable and sustainable funding is essential for Alaska's schools, especially in rural areas where options for education are often limited to just one school.

Over the years, inadequate funding has created significant challenges for districts across the state. Many schools have had to reduce programs and electives, increase class sizes, cut extracurricular activities, and struggle to retain and recruit qualified staff. These issues directly affect the quality of education our students receive.

Our district is currently facing a \$3,144,605 budget shortfall. To address this, we have already absorbed several positions and restructured our classified staff, leveraging all available funding sources to the maximum extent possible. These efforts have allowed us to stretch our discretionary dollars as far as they will go, but the financial strain has reached its limit. We urgently need relief to maintain the quality of education our students deserve.

The rising costs of utilities, staffing, air transportation, health insurance, and other essential services have made it increasingly difficult to sustain school operations. Inflation has affected every aspect of our work, yet funding has not kept pace with these growing demands.

If we do not invest in our public schools, programs, and students, we are choosing not to invest in Alaska's future. Pennsylvania provides an excellent example of how bold investments in education can address disparities and create better outcomes for students. Recently, the Governor of Pennsylvania announced an \$11 billion investment in education and mental health services. This funding includes a "Fair Funding Formula" to support underfunded districts, mental health initiatives, universal free breakfast programs, and improvements to school infrastructure. These efforts promote equity, improve learning conditions, and prioritize student well-being.

Alaska has the opportunity to do something similar by supporting HB69. Increasing the Base Student Allocation means investing in our children, our communities, and the future of our state. Thank you for your dedication to Alaska's students and for considering this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

John Hargis
Superintendent
jhargis@lysd.org

Michael Mason

From: jsfield <jsfield@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2025 11:03 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: education budget

Dear Senate Education Committee,

I am writing today as a concerned parent of a child in the Anchorage School District, and a community member, to advocate for increased funding of our schools. Every year we are in crisis mode in large part because there has been no increase to the BSA for many years.

My daughter is in 5th grade at O'Malley elementary. She has been in French immersion since the start of the program in 2019. We are certainly proud of our daughter learning a second language and we know the benefits of language immersion programs go beyond biliteracy. Numerous studies cite Increased cognitive skills, improved memory, better problem-solving skills, and increased cultural awareness. Most of the world speaks more than one language, the US does not. Immersion programs improve that.

We learned O'Malley is currently slated to lose 5 teachers, most likely ending the immersion program our family has been committed to for six years with the expectation the program will continue through high school. We have attended school board meetings and heard testimony from immersion parents of the positive impacts of these programs – career opportunities, social connections with peers, and a stronger sense of community. We've personally experienced our daughter's pride in speaking another language, and how confident and socially connected she is with her fellow students, and us with other parents.

I urge you to support HB69 and support increased funding of education. The benefit to our students and communities are great. The downside is grim. Teachers and staff laid off, programs cut, families disengaged, not to mention the long-term economic impacts of a poorly educated workforce.

Education is an essential service. I urge you to keep that in mind as the House and Senate consider education funding and HB69.

Sincerely,
John S Field

John S Field
jsfield@gmail.com

Michael Mason

From: Kaile Hutton <kaile.hutton@k21schools.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 11:21 AM
To: Senate Education; House Education
Subject: FULL SUPPORT FOR HB 69

As someone who has worked in Alaskan Education for over a decade, the increase in the BSA is incredibly overdue. Not only are we behind the times of current inflation rates, inflation PROOFING the BSA is a bare minimum action to help protect our kids' education.

Please stand with the Future of Alaska, our children, and invest in them by passing HB 69

All the best,

--

Kaile Hutton (She/her)
Administrative Assistant
Ketchikan Charter School
Office: (907) 225 - 8568
Ext. #4701

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Michael Mason

From: karen severson <fvodinfamilie@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2025 6:39 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69

I beg you to support HB 69 and our children in the public schools system in Alaska. We are suffering and charter schools are not the answer!

Thank you,

Karen & Mark Severson
Petersburg
Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Karen McSpadden <kmcspadden@chathamdsd.org>
Sent: Sunday, February 2, 2025 6:14 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69

To: The Senate Education Committee

My name is Karen McSpadden, I am the principal of Gustavus School in Southeast Alaska. I am in Support HB 69 to secure Alaska's educational future.

Raising the Base Student Allocation (BSA) is imperative to keep schools operational, our teachers in classrooms, and for Alaska students' future. Failure to act on HB 69 will deepen the crisis and jeopardize the future of Alaska's youth.

Alaska's current BSA has failed to keep pace with inflation, leaving schools struggling to afford even the most basic operational costs. Rising expenses for utilities, classroom supplies, and transportation in rural areas where costs are exponentially higher, have pushed many districts, including ours, into financial hardship. This in combination with the absence of SRS funding connected to the lack of monies for forest receipts in Tongass National Forest (where we are located), face even more hardship to the tune of over a 400,000 deficit.

Without an increase in the BSA, our teachers will have no other alternative but to leave for states that offer better compensation and stability. The teacher shortage is even more severe in our rural community where the high cost of living and lack of housing make it impossible to attract new educators.

The domino effect of the current BSA is insurmountable. Businesses and families are more likely to leave our community to areas with stronger schools which will drive Alaska's economic growth elsewhere. By supporting HB 69 and increasing the BSA, lawmakers can help create a more thriving future here in Alaska for students and our economy.

We are urging lawmakers to prioritize education and pass HB 69 to increase the Base Student Allocation. The uncertainty surrounding educational funding is pushing Alaska educators to the brink, forcing them to make impossible choices as they struggle to plan for the future and preserve the quality of education students desperately need.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen McSpadden/Principal/Gustavus School

Chatham School District

Michael Mason

From: Kate Helligso Paulson <khelligso@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 10:57 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Kodiak Family in support of HB 69

I am emailing tonight to express my support of HB 69 and urge the state to begin investing in Alaska's future again.

As a born and raised Kodiak resident, I am troubled to see what is happening to my town and many towns around the state due to the extreme lack of support for public education.

I grew up in Kodiak in the 1990's. After spending a decade away for college and work, I decided to return to Alaska to give my four young children the childhood my husband and I so loved.

Since returning to Kodiak, we have seen first hand the effects of the childcare crisis, the lack of support for young working families, and last week, our community faced the gut-wrenching decision to close my child's elementary school.

I can't help but wonder if I grew up in Kodiak during its peak, and my children, at its decline. With old, failing infrastructure, low enrollment numbers, less opportunities, its hard to remember some days why I moved back.

I'm investing in Alaska, and I'm ready to invite more young families to this glorious place, but the state must meet us halfway. You must fund the education my children deserve, or we will continue to see declines across every sector.

My hope is that the recent pessimism pervading our town, surrounding the school closure, will be dispelled with a renewed investment from the state, for our kids.

Thank you for your time,

Kate Helligso Paulson

Michael Mason

From: Katie Rohrs <katie.e.rohrs@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 1:46 PM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: HB69 testimony

To whom it may concern -

My name is Katie Rohrs and I am the current PTA president at Bear Valley Elementary in Anchorage. I am writing to you today, in hopes that you will keep education and necessary funding at the forefront as you work through the budget for this fiscal year.

As many of you are aware, Bear Valley was recently placed on the school closure list as the Anchorage School District confronts a lack of funding and budget constraints. Thankfully, through community involvement, hours of research, data analysis and testimony, corrected data was uncovered that allowed our school to be removed from the closure list. The turmoil our families were suddenly thrust into ignited our resolve to fight for education and understanding of what our district and so many others are faced with when it comes to educational funding and budgeting.

- Why and how had our state reached a point where we were relying on bandaid funding from year to year?
- Why has the BSA only increased 5% in fourteen years, falling far short of inflation?
- Why is there a shortage of qualified staff in our schools?
- Why do we lack the resources and materials to ensure our children receive a proper education?
- What else will be stripped away as various levels of government seek to balance budgets?

Our family relocated here from the Houston, TX area four years ago in support of the oil and gas industry. We have three children in the public school system and I myself taught in diverse socioeconomic schools during my time in the classroom before our move to Anchorage. The funding concerns for education are not specific to Alaska. This is a growing problem all across the United States and with the future of The Department of Education in limbo, this just further puts into light the need for a well thought-out plan by our state.

It sits with *you* to make a decision that puts our children and the future of Alaska front and center. If there is no priority put on our youth, then where is the draw to stay, enter the work force or receive higher education here? Do we not want them to turn around and invest in our community as adults? For example, UAA recently lost its accreditation for teaching which means there are no student teachers in Alaska who can then funnel into our classrooms as seasoned educators retire.

What myself, our PTA board, and families in Anchorage are asking of you, is to raise the BSA. Not another 5% over the course of the next fourteen years, rather to a number that gives our schools the **teachers, staff, materials** and **support** they need to secure the safety and future of our youth here in Alaska. HB69 appears to be the launching point we need to get us to that place. Please vote to ensure that we do not have a repeat of last year's vote that left education behind.

Currently, PTAs, grants, private funding, and other support organizations are providing a shocking and unsustainable level of support to our school system. Within the last few years, The Bear Valley PTA has purchased a snow plow, provided functioning blinds throughout the school that are essential during lockdown drills, replaced thousands of library books, projector bulbs, computers and other technology, provided a pallet jack, replaced gym equipment and even purchased ice melt for our custodial staff, among many others. In addition, we are providing resources for enrichment opportunities and afterschool programs and Bear Valley Community Association (BVCA) offers before and after school childcare for our working families. I fully

acknowledge that our school has excellent parent engagement and support and that the support structure for many other schools does not look like ours. However, this monumental level of support from families is not sustainable. Parents and grandparents cannot keep our education system afloat... We do not receive Title funding and are solely reliant on the passing of bonds and community support to get things done.

As a transplant, who has lived and worked in many different locations, there is something special about Alaska that draws you in and makes you want this to be your forever home. If our attitude and actions towards education do not improve drastically, we, and many others, will make a difficult decision about what is best for our families and our children's academic futures. Talented, generous, invaluable and skilled residents across this state will take their families elsewhere. It does not need to be this way if we prioritize funding for our education system.

I would like to invite you to visit with the Bear Valley PTA so that we may educate on areas where we need your help. We want to use our voices in a productive and meaningful way to help drive change and are here to be of service to you throughout this process as well. Thank you for your time, and look forward to additional dialogue in the future.

Katie Rohrs

Bear Valley PTA President

president@bearvalleypta.com katie.e.rohrs@gmail.com

Michael Mason

From: Katie Ronsse Libby <katierlibby@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 11:52 AM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: Support smaller class sizes and a meaningful increase in the BSA

First of all, **thank you** for your value and commitment to education for the newest generation of Alaskans.

I understand tough decisions need to be made however please prioritize support for lowering pupil to teacher ratios and retaining our language immersion programs which depend on stable multi-year funding.

The consequences of the proposed cuts of 5 teachers at our Omalley Elementary school include a swell of class sizes to outrageous numbers and a decimation of the O'Malley French Immersion program.

My 4 year old daughter is slated to enter the incoming **kindergarten class** which is now slated to have **30 students in her class and no teaching assistant**. In her age group, [childcare.gov](https://www.childcare.gov) states to allow "No more than 12 school-age children in a group or class".

Can you imagine tending to the many needs of 30 kindergarteners at once, let alone demanding that they produce "results"? Even for our kindergarten teachers, who are real-life superheroes to me--- this is unreasonable. 24 kindergarten students with a teaching assistant is at capacity but reasonable.

Secondly, Language programs take years to develop in order to find native speaking teachers and are not likely to be reinstated once dismantled. There is a window period of putting in energy to learn a language when a child's brain is malleable. At a local language competition- the Omalley french elementary students performed better than all the Advanced Placement high school students and were mistaken for being native French speakers. A pride point in Anchorage education is our emphasis on strong language immersion programs, which reflects the value of diversity in our city and helps us thrive in an interconnected world.

Please do your part and take a stand to have a **meaningful vs moderate** increase in the BSA, and demonstrate you care about education and through **support of HB69**.

Katie

--

Katrina Ronsse Libby, DPT, COMT
(c) 907-903-6625

Michael Mason

From: Keddie Johnson <madlykrafty@outlook.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 6:31 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: House bill 69

Ladies and gentlemen of the Alaska State Legislature, esteemed colleagues, and fellow Alaskans,

Today, we stand at a crossroads where our decisions will shape the future of our state's education and its fiscal health. I rise to voice my concerns over House Bill 69, a proposal that, while well-intentioned, threatens to lead us down a path of fiscal irresponsibility and misplaced priorities.

First, let's address the elephant in the room: our budget. We're all too familiar with the volatility of oil prices, which still largely dictate our state's financial wellbeing. Committing to a significant increase in education funding, with an additional \$2,500 per student over three years and annual inflation adjustments, without a stable, predictable revenue stream is akin to building a house on shifting sands. This bill could saddle future legislatures with budgetary constraints, forcing cuts in other critical areas like healthcare, public safety, or infrastructure maintenance.

But it's not just about the money. The argument that more funding will automatically translate into better educational outcomes is, at best, overly optimistic. We've increased education budgets before, and yet, our students' performance metrics haven't seen the leap we'd hoped for. Why? Because the issues within our education system are multifaceted, involving teacher quality, curriculum effectiveness, student engagement, and community support. Throwing more money at the problem without addressing these root causes is like giving aspirin to someone with a broken bone – it might ease the pain, but it won't fix the fracture.

Moreover, this bill sets a dangerous precedent with its inflation adjustments. If we tie education funding to inflation, how long until every sector of our government demands the same? Our budgeting would become a guessing game, where predictability and planning go out the window. This isn't the foundation for sound fiscal policy; it's a recipe for chaos.

We also need to consider the unique needs of our districts. Not every school in Alaska faces the same challenges. Some need help with infrastructure, others with special education or early childhood programs. A blanket increase doesn't address these nuances, potentially leaving some districts with funds they can't effectively use while others remain underserved.

Lastly, there's the timing and political nature of this bill. In our rush to meet budget deadlines, are we giving this proposal the scrutiny it deserves? Are we engaging in the necessary debate over alternative, perhaps more innovative, solutions that could offer better outcomes for our students?

I urge my colleagues to reconsider House Bill 69. Let's not compromise our state's fiscal future for a short-term fix. Instead, let's commit to a comprehensive review of our education system, ensuring that any investment we make is both effective and sustainable. We owe it to our children, our educators, and the future of Alaska to do this right, not just quickly.

Thank you,
Keddie Johnson

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Michael Mason

From: Kristi Downing <kristi.downing@k12northstar.org>
Sent: Saturday, January 25, 2025 9:40 PM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: Supporting SB 69 Funding Education

Greetings,

I am asking for you to support the new education bill to raise the BSA for our schools! I can assure you that all of the cuts across so many years are not helping teachers or students reach their full potential.

I love my job but I am tired of being consistently asked to do more with less. This idea that "throwing money at the problem hasn't helped increase test scores or learning" is a false narrative. What money!!? It has been nothing but cuts cuts cuts year after year. (By the way, the test scores at our school ARE increasing despite the heavy lift being asked of teachers. AND, we are in danger of being closed - there is a large effort in place to make Pearl Creek Elementary School in Fairbanks a magnet school, which we could use your support on as well.)

Good schools are part of a good economy. We need to support the education of our youth and inspire them to want to stay in Alaska to raise their families. To have good jobs, they need a good education.

Supporting education by raising the BSA is an easy start to rebuilding robust, vibrant, and effective schools for our children. Raising the BSA will also go a long way in letting our teachers know that they are valued and that what they do every day for all their students is valued.

Moral is low. Our schools feel like they are imploding and that is NOT good for Alaska. We NEED to attract the best and brightest, we need a diverse workforce and economy. Schools are closing, lives are in turmoil over it, and people are leaving Alaska and leaving our district.

An increase to the BSA is imperative. Support the bill to increase the BSA.

Thank you for your time,

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Every day we are with children we should be focusing on intention, agency, kindness, play, and reflection

Kristi Downing (she/her)
Pearl Creek Elementary School
kristi.downing@k12northstar.org
907-479-4234

Michael Mason

From: Larri Spengler <larri.irene.spengler@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2025 2:11 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69

Greetings:

Please use HB 69, when it reaches you, to fully fund education in Alaska. We need to raise the BSA by \$1000!

Thank you!

Larri

--

Larri Irene Spengler
4545 Thane Road
Juneau, Alaska 99801
907-586-9768 (phone/fax)
Larri.Irene.Spengler@gmail.com

Michael Mason

From: Laura Silliphant <laura_silliphant@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2025 8:26 AM
To: Senate Education; Senate Education
Subject: Fund our public schools. Raise BSA. Suggested solutions.

I am a mother of two children in Anchorage. My youngest attends Aquarian Charter School and my oldest is in his second year at Romig Middle School. I am a taxpayer, a voter, and petroleum geologist in the oil and gas industry. Both Aquarian and the HG program at Romig are excellent models for public education in Anchorage. My boys have excelled academically as well as in the after-school activities such as running club, JNYO, Battle of the Books, Cross Country, Jazz Band, and Track. I have been extremely disappointed that the State House and Senate have not funded the student base allocation rate so that it meets today's needs as well as future needs.

Relying on revenue streams from declining oil fields is not enough to manage our state resources. Implementing a state income tax for all people who work in Alaska is one option. Reducing the permanent fund dividend is another option. The one option that must end is refusing to adequately fund our public schools. We must provide excellent public education for our youth. We must continue to provide in-class standards as well as after-school activities that develop leadership, teamwork, community, and pride.

At Aquarian Charter School, to sustain our current teachers and programs, we need the Base Student Allocation (BSA) to raise by \$1,900 per student. Please know that this is what would be needed if Aquarian didn't make any cuts or raise class sizes at all. Without additional funding, Aquarian will be forced to pull over \$700,000 from their unallocated funds. Aquarian would only be able to do this for three years before the unallocated funds would be depleted. Without a BSA increase, Aquarian may have to: decrease their nurse to half time, eliminate night custodian services, raise class sizes, and decrease staff.

The rising costs of salaries, benefits, and classroom resources make an increased BSA essential. If there is not an increase to funding for next year, salaries and benefits alone would make up 103% of Aquarian's budget. Without adequate funding, academic programs, intervention supports, and extracurricular opportunities may be impacted. Aquarian's model of high engagement, strong relationships, and academic relies on sustained funding to maintain manageable class sizes and specialized programming.

At Romig Middle School, when I attended the cake auction, a benefit put on by the students and parent volunteers to raise money for Romig's music program, the principal stated that if the base student allocation rate is not increased, Romig will lose multiple teachers. Our children, their education, and our future depend upon the excellence of public schools and their after-school activities that develop their leadership, commitment to growth, teamwork, and sense of community.

House Bill 69 is a great start at increasing the Base Student Allocation rate today and for our future. Please note that the excellent schools that my sons attend cannot sustain their normal course of action without an increase in the BSA. Please note that there is no reason to tug and war between critical missions in our state. The legislators need to agree to add additional revenue streams such as state income tax for all workers in the state of AK as well as reducing the permanent fund dividend.

In 1976, the people of the state of Alaska established the permanent fund to make sure that future Alaskans would benefit from the early revenues of the state's non-renewable oil and gas resource. 2025 is the 49th year since the people of Alaska created this funding source for the future. As expected, the non-renewable resource is much less (averaging 465 thousand barrels a day in 2024 versus over 2 million barrels a day in 1988). It is time

for our current legislators to increase our revenue stream to pay for the necessary increases to the base student allocation fund. Stop the tug of war and fund education this year and beyond.

Thank you,

Laura Gregersen

4021 Woronzof Drive, Anchorage, AK 99517 Laura_silliphant@yahoo.com

907-317-1123

PS. I add the history of the permanent fund dividend for your reference. (<https://pfd.alaska.gov/Division-Info/Historical-Timeline>)

1976

Voters pass a constitutional amendment to establish the Permanent Fund (Alaska Constitution, Article IX, Section 15).

1980

First Permanent Fund Dividend legislation enacted. The legislation established a program giving every adult Alaska resident \$50 for every year of residency since statehood in 1959 and also established a dividend Fund. Payment of dividends were stayed under litigation (Zobel v Williams) challenging the constitutionality of the program.

1982

U.S Supreme Court ruled the 1980 legislation unconstitutional. In response to the litigation, the legislature passed legislation authorizing equal dividend payments to all six-month residents. The first dividend amount was \$1,000. The first dividend checks were distributed June 14, 1982.

1983

Residency period defined as 6 months ending March 31. Filing due date established as June 30.

1985

Hold-harmless program funding for public assistance recipients changed from General Fund to Permanent Fund dividend Fund.

1988

January 1988 - Permanent Fund Dividend Division established. Positions with PFD responsibilities in Administrative Services (20), Enforcement (23), and Public Services (14) transferred to the new division. Enforcement and Public Services divisions eliminated.

1989

Legislature changed residency period from 6 months to 24 months. Individuals banned from assigning dividends (except to government agencies) by regulation. Felons not eligible for dividends. Physical presence requirement established.

1990

Superior Court ruled 24-month residency requirement unconstitutional and changed the residency requirement to 12 months (Lindly v Malone). Disclosure requirements established to print program costs on dividend checks.

1991

Check-off program for Advance College Tuition started. Percent of dividend subject to levy for private judgments increased from 50% to 55%. Fairbanks office closed in September 1991 (2 positions). One position each transferred to Anchorage and Juneau office. First receipt cards mailed.

1992

Individuals banned from assigning dividends (except to government agencies) by statute. Review Unit moved from Anchorage to Juneau.

1993

Direct-deposit program for full dividends established. Residency period changed to calendar year. Voter registration forms included with dividend application.

1994

Filing due date changed to March 31. Longevity Bonus Annuity check-off program began. Legislature authorizes the division to charge fee for processing claims and assignments on dividends

1995

Longevity Bonus Annuity check-off program repealed.

1996

Misdemeanants with two prior crimes not eligible for dividends.

1997

Fairbanks office re-opened February 1997 (2 positions).

1998

Internet program implemented to allow applicants to check their status online. All allowable absences defined in statutes (statutory provision for commissioner to define absences by regulation repealed). Spouses accompanying eligible residents authorized as allowable absence. Authority to file for estates (persons who die during filing period) established. Physical presence changed to 72 hours every two years (effective for 2000 dividend). Percent of dividend subject to levy for private judgment increased from 55% to 80%.

1999

On-line application implemented, but applicants required to print and sign full application. Direct-deposit program expanded to include partial dividends. Document Processing Unit night shift (17 positions) eliminated. Emergency regulations detailing alien eligibility adopted.

2000

Imaging system and new data entry system implemented January 2000. First year that applications imaged. Improved on-line Internet application implemented March 2000 (applicants required to sign signature page only). Fairbanks office moved to Cushman Street location September 1.

2001

Review and Appeals units consolidated into the Dividend Enforcement, Review and Appeals Unit. Alaska Supreme Court rules that immigrant aliens who form intent to remain in Alaska qualify for dividends.

2002

Receipt letter replaces application receipt card. Department of Health and Social Services files applications electronically. Final year securities companies participated in the direct deposit program. Misdemeanants with one prior felony or two prior misdemeanors not eligible for dividend.

2003

Online applications exceed 100,000 (155,226). Electronic signature for online applications implemented March 20, 2003. All review cases worked by year-end. Fraud Investigations moved from Anchorage to Juneau.

2004

Receipt letters eliminated. Online application expanded to cover full application and supplemental schedule. Tri-fold direct deposit advice implemented. Selective Service registration part of the application.

2005

Online applications exceed 200,000 (211,464) and electronically signed applications exceed 100,000 (129,822). Time period for applicants to respond to requests for information changed to 30 days.

2007

Over 2/3 of Alaskans apply online (420,596) and electronically signed applications exceed 275,000 (276,203).

2008

One time resource rebate added to dividend. Payment timing moved up to September in response to high energy costs. New eligibility software program implemented.

2009

The Charitable Contribution program, Pick.Click.Give is implemented allowing applicants to donate all or part of the dividend to non-profit agencies.

2010

Community distribution centers are used for distributing paper applications for the first time. Postal delivery to every Alaskan mailbox is reduced to targeting mailings in light of over 75% of applicants filing online.

2013

The Division publishes a Facebook page to develop an additional interactive experience with Alaskans through social networking.

2014

The Division implements system changes to expand the options for Direct Deposit of dividend payments. Within months, the number of financial institutions selected by applicants for Direct Deposit jumps from 22 to over 350!

2015

The State of Alaska moved to utilizing an integrated accounting system, which greatly affected the PFD payment process. This transition was successful, and will continue to be utilized.

The Positive Payee Standards were implemented, creating a State Warrant that has security features to prevent fraud, as well as providing for a more 'uniform' State Warrant to be recognized across Alaska.

2017

A voter initiative passed, joining The Division of Elections and the Permanent Fund Dividend Division in what is termed the PFD Automatic Voter Registration process. This meant that every Adult Application filed beginning in March of 2017 registered the applicant to vote, with an 'opt out' notice being sent to the individual.

2018

In 2018, the PFD division created a new application specifically for tribal courts. In Alaska, there was a need for tribal courts to apply on behalf of a child. This occurred outside of State programs like H&SS. Because of this, we created an application catorred to tribal courts so that they could continue ensuring that children in their custody are receiving their PFD.

2019

In 2019, the Education Raffle was put into the application as an option for individuals to give a portion of their PFD to benefit education statewide.

In 2019, individuals who utilize the online application as well as direct deposit will be paid in the first payment run in October. Those who utilize the paper application or request a paper check instead of direct deposit will be paid in the second payment run in October.

Michael Mason

From: langford_lauren <langford_lauren@asdk12.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 2:40 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SUPPORT HB69 FOR NEW AND FUTURE EDUCATORS IN ALASKA

My name is Lauren Langford, and I am an educator in Anchorage, Alaska. With a hire date of 2023, every February is a nightmare, and this year in particular because of the depth of proposed budget cuts to teachers and programs. One week ago, I received a displacement notice from my principal. Since 299 other educators are also being displaced, some with hire dates as far back as 2017, I am not sure I will be able to secure another position at a different school in Anchorage or anywhere in the state unless funding is increased for public education.

My elderly parents are here, my brother and his young family are here, and my daughter of whom I have shared custody with my former husband is here. I don't want to leave Alaska and find another job. I want my government to fund education so that I can work here in the place where I have made my home.

I want the government to make good on the promise I believed two years ago when I paid \$25,000 out of pocket to earn a master's and become an educator that our state needed teachers so badly there is no possible scenario in which I could be without a job no matter how bad budget concerns became.

I want to stop going through this each February, the stress and anxiety of wondering whether there will be enough money for education feels like it is killing me.

Please rally to fund public education. If we cannot invest in our future and the educators who are nurturing it, what point is there to live in Alaska any longer?

Sincerely,

Lauren M. Langford
907-444-5685

Michael Mason

From: lee bolling <leetron@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2025 3:51 PM
To: Rep. Mia Costello
Cc: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: Support Education!

Dear Representative Costello,

I want you to support a permanent and guaranteed increase to the BSA through the support of HB 69 so that we can properly educate our children.

As a concerned parent in Alaska, I am alarmed by the trends affecting our schools. News of closures and budget cuts has generated anxiety within our community. I urge the Alaska Legislature to address this issue by investing in public education early in the legislative session. Predictable funding is critical to prevent teacher layoffs and enable efficient operation of schools.

Prolonged budget reductions have led to detrimental outcomes, including school closures, termination of programs, and declining educational quality. It is time to reverse this trend; Alaska must invest in public education for a brighter future.

Over the past decade, continuous budget cuts have increased class sizes, reduced support staff, and eliminated essential programs. The threat of school closures disrupts children's learning environments and separates them from friends and teachers. These schools are integral to our communities.

Our children need a comprehensive education to excel. Budget threats are a significant blow to our community and an injustice to our children.

Please prioritize investment in public education to secure Alaska's future.

Sincerely,

Lee Bolling
10830 Kamishak Bay Cir
Anchorage, AK
99515

Michael Mason

From: Linda Thompson <halblade@gci.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 10:24 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69 Testimony

Please vote Yes on HB69. Our “Brick and Mortar” neighborhood schools are barely holding on because school funding has been politically restricted for too many years. In reaction, many people have chosen to homeschool, by using programs offered by other school districts, such as Galena School District based IDEA, and Yukon-Koyukuk School District based Raven, both of which serve students outside their own districts. This artificially shifts revenue to other districts, complicating school funding equations and limiting resources to the homeschool students’ own local school districts, reducing classes and opportunities to all students in each community. The risks and benefits of homeschooling are invaluable in this setting, because IDEA and Raven are unregulated by the State of Alaska and any statistics comparing these publicly funded programs are unavailable.

The above conclusions are based on painstaking inquiries made to DEED, IDEA and Raven representatives and employees and to my own (Juneau) school district over the past few months. The difficulty that I experienced obtaining information on homeschool student numbers from these institutions suggests that some parties have an interest in concealing the facts behind state funding for them. I would strongly encourage Alaska Legislators to investigate and publish details of state funding for these home school organizations, local public schools and districts, and private schools receiving state funds.

Budgetary limitations have already caused the closure of one of two Juneau High schools, with some Juneau High School students lacking classroom space and critical courses. Some homeschool based high schoolers may also be affected, as they access some classes through their local public schools.

Please support our Democracy by supporting our neighborhood schools with an increased BSA with a willingness to override any Gubernatorial Veto, if necessary.

Sincerely,

Linda Thompson

Michael Mason

From: Lisa <lckrebs@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 12:07 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB69

To all Senate members,

I urge you to increase spending for our State's public educational system. Over many years our State has been stagnant or greatly reduced its support of public education. It is time to change this trend to protect the future of our youth, their families, the communities and our state as a whole.

I have been an Alaskan resident and raised two children in our local public schools, and have witnessed the cuts to many programs and more importantly to staff. Without good teachers we fail our children and the future of Alaska.

Please vote in favor of funding HB 69.

Thank you,

Lisa Krebs

Michael Mason

From: Loraine Navarro <loraine.naak@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 12:45 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please, Support HB69

Dear Senate Education Committee,

Once again, I listened to hours of disheartening and powerful public testimony during the Fairbanks North Star Borough School Board meeting tonight... At a time when public education is deeply hurting in our state, I'm urging you to please support HB69 this week. As you must already be aware of, this year it is not one but five elementary schools that are very likely to close in Fairbanks - including Pearl Creek Elementary, the best performing elementary school in our community and the one my son has been lucky to attend to since kindergarten.

I understand there are ways to improve the way funds are being used, and our district and school board members have been working hard at this together with the input of our community... but the reality is, the main catalyst for the deep crisis our community is facing right now is the consistent lack of proper state funding for public education over the past several years... funding that is essential to allow for a proper and thriving public education in Alaska. It is a shame that, for years, the BSA has not been adjusted to mirror inflation - and that most of you did not have the courage to stand up to our Governor and do what is right for the children of Alaska when you had a chance to do so last year. Now is the time to stand on the side of the people you represent, and insure proper and sustainable funding for public education in our state.

Low enrollment issues will NOT be tackled by closing schools that are a safe place to be for the most vulnerable on our community (Hunter Elementary), the best performing schools in the community (Pearl Creek Elementary), or schools that are essential to the functioning of surrounding rural communities (Two Rivers and Salsha Elementary). Please, keep in mind that the decisions you are making have very real consequences in your constituents' daily lives. Unlike some would like to believe, home schooling is not a solution for everyone, including single parents like myself who do not have the option to stay home when our job is our only source of income to feed and care for our children.

Improving enrollment in our beloved state starts by making it an attractive and safe place to be for families. Gutting public education funding has done nothing but deeply hurting our state and increasing the loss of both our educators and our students, as families decide to switch to other forms of education for their children - or to leave the state altogether.

Families all over Alaska will be closely following the decisions you make over the next few days and weeks. It is time to truly and boldly represent and defend the people who elected you, and the most vulnerable in our society - our children.

Thank you for your time and for putting our children before any political agenda. Please, vote in favor of HB69.

Loraine Navarro
Fairbanks, AK

Michael Mason

From: Lorinda Jensen <lorinda.jensen@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 11:58 AM
To: Senate Education; House Education
Subject: House Bill 69

Good afternoon,

My name is Lorinda Jensen, I am a parent to a first grader and an incoming kindergartener in the Anchorage School District, as well as a previous elementary school teacher in the district. I am writing to urge you to pass and implement House Bill 69, which would introduce immediate inflation proofing and a \$1,000 increase to the BSA for FY26.

My children attend a charter school, which is very transparent about finances. I have listened to meeting after meeting this year where the Academic Policy Committee at the school tries to balance an impossible budget. With the current BSA, they are unable to fully fund their staff next year.

Budget cuts have had a major negative impact on the Anchorage School District year after year. Flat funding has resulted in school closures, increased class sizes, less access to athletics and activities, and more. By passing House Bill 69, we would be able to stop our downward trend and start improving the educational outcomes for Alaska's children.

Again, I urge you to put the children in our state first and increase funding in our schools by passing House Bill 69.

Thank you!
Lorinda Jensen
Anchorage, Ak

Michael Mason

From: Lucas Smith <lucas.smith28@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 2:34 PM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: HB69 - EDUCATION FUNDING: INCREASE BSA

Alaska Legislature Education Committee Members:

I encourage the committees to not waste any time aligning necessary education policy reforms with the priorities of our new federal administration as demanded overwhelmingly by the public. This will be important to ensure funding eligibility and associated predictability in the fast-approaching next fiscal year.

Legislation delays due to education committee inaction and failure to act appropriately could have significant impacts to local communities, school districts, and children. The resulting consequences and failure on the committees' behalf would be extremely disappointing.

The committees should pay particular attention to recent Federal Executive Orders. So far these include:
January 20, 2025, ,Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government, and
January 28, 2025, Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation

I hope the committee acts swiftly to help ensure students are free from existing abuse and mental health risks resulting from guidelines which have remained unchecked for too long. An example of such guidelines include the Anchorage School District's publication entitled, "Administrative Guidelines: Working with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students and Employees".

Good luck to you all in rising to the occasion and satisfying this urgent need. Many of us look forward to celebrating additional inklings of positive trends in the education of young Alaskans.

Sincerely,
Lucas Smith
Anchorage Resident

Michael Mason

From: Lucas Smith <lucas.smith28@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 9, 2025 8:59 PM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: RE: HB69 - EDUCATION FUNDING: INCREASE BSA

Dear Alaska Legislature Education Committee Members:

You all have been exceptionally quiet about the steady progress you should be making to align Alaska's education system with the priorities voters are overwhelmingly demanding. We are thrilled to see our Trump administration quickly respond to these demands, swiftly delivering executive orders intended to address the terrible ideology and practices which have been permitted to persist for too long.

As you prepare for the joint education committee meeting of the house and senate scheduled for Monday, February 10, 2025, please focus on the direction we have set for you. This direction is captured in the following executive orders:

- January 20, 2025, Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government
- January 28, 2025, Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation
- January 29, 2025, Ending radical indoctrination in k-12 schooling
- January 29, 2025, Expanding educational freedom and opportunities for families
- February 5, 2025, Keeping men out of women's sports

Please keep in mind, as you hear the invited testimony of select members of the Alaska Association of School Boards (AASB) Monday morning, it is the stubborn policies of radical board members which have prompted such a strong response by voters. For example, past AASB president Margo Bellamy and AASB member Andy Holleman are members of the Anchorage School Board, which have failed to rein in Superintendent Bryantt and the district's published document entitled "*Administrative Guidelines: Working with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students and Employees.*"

There is still plentiful time in the legislative session to accomplish what must be done. Please do not disappoint everyone by neglecting this need or failing to act.

Sincerely,
Lucas Smith
Anchorage Resident

From: Lucas Smith
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2025 11:45 PM
To: 'House.Education@akleg.gov' <House.Education@akleg.gov>; 'Senate.Education@akleg.gov' <Senate.Education@akleg.gov>
Subject: RE: HB69 - EDUCATION FUNDING: INCREASE BSA

Alaska Legislature Education Committee Members:

Sadly, I've received no enthusiastic responses to my initial message. Thus, I've taken the liberty to start you off on the right foot with the attached draft bill. I can't take full credit for the content, but frankly, what needs to be

addressed is no secret. There's much more to legislate for improving the health and education environment for Alaska youth and I look forward to staying in contact with all of you. Taking the opportunity to advance a bill like this early in the session will indicate the committees' willingness to work towards a solution meeting the needs of youth health and education.

I look forward to witnessing the legislature picking up this torch and running with it.

Again, good luck to you all in rising to the occasion and satisfying this urgent need.

Sincerely,
Lucas Smith
Anchorage Resident

From: Lucas Smith
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 2:34 PM
To: House.Education@akleg.gov; Senate.Education@akleg.gov
Subject: HB69 - EDUCATION FUNDING: INCREASE BSA

Alaska Legislature Education Committee Members:

I encourage the committees to not waste any time aligning necessary education policy reforms with the priorities of our new federal administration as demanded overwhelmingly by the public. This will be important to ensure funding eligibility and associated predictability in the fast-approaching next fiscal year.

Legislation delays due to education committee inaction and failure to act appropriately could have significant impacts to local communities, school districts, and children. The resulting consequences and failure on the committees' behalf would be extremely disappointing.

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Good luck to you all in rising to the occasion and satisfying this urgent need. Many of us look forward to celebrating additional inklings of positive trends in the education of young Alaskans.

Sincerely,
Lucas Smith
Anchorage Resident

Michael Mason

From: Amanda Smith <luccaroo22@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 7:00 PM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: Fwd: HB 69

Please consider my daughter's testimony.
Thank you.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Lucca Lowe <luccalow11@gmail.com>
Date: Wednesday, January 29, 2025
Subject: HB 69
To: Amanda Smith <Luccaroo22@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern, my name is Lucca and I'm a middle schooler in Homer Alaska. I am in support of HB 69 and here's why.

To start, I know many people including myself who favor musical and theater classes over any others. Plus, the teachers that teach choir/band in Homer are people that the students love and trust as a good person to talk to, and without them some of us would not be where we are right now. Also, without theatrics and musical presentation, there wouldn't be half as many amazing productions in our district. Athletic activities provided by the school are some of the best things about school. It gives kids motivation to keep their grades up, and without sports there would be a serious lack of motivation to even try to pass in school. Adding to that, without sports, plenty of kids would not be in good health or wouldn't be able to get in shape in any other way, seeing as there are limited sport options outside of school. One of my very close friends has severe stomach problems and needs to have physical activity outside of P.E.

In conclusion, these are the reasons that we need more funding for the schools all over the district. The kids' mental and physical health is on the line. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Lucca

Michael Mason

From: Luke Boles <lukeboles@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2025 7:09 AM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Robert Myers; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski
Subject: Support HB 69 BSA Increase

Honorable Senators and Representatives,

Thank you for considering HB69 to increase the base student allocation. I support additional BSA increase beyond the levels in HB69, but HB69 is a good start. Educational investment has been neglected in our state for too long.

Our education funding situation reminds me of the recent travails of a friend. My pal had a truck for over a decade that was nice when he got it. He seldom maintained it. Maybe a couple oil changes over the 10+ years he had it. Nothing else. No brakes, no spark plugs, no tire rotations.

Recently he complained to his family about the way the truck was running. His family thought since he hadn't spent more than \$100 on maintenance in 10+ years that he should put \$1500-\$2000 into it and see if that got better performance. After some thought and debate/discussion he decided that the family was right. The best thing to do was have \$1500-\$2000 work done. The mechanic thought it would need \$3000-\$4000, but my pal insisted on the limit of \$2000 (he's anchored to 20th century shop rates). Plus at \$4k his kids wouldn't get new iPhones again this year – which is their birthright.

He dropped the truck off with the mechanic. On the way home he ran into his tall neighbor by the neighborhood mailboxes. It was a little strange, because Tall neighbor usually doesn't talk with him. But this day Tall neighbor asked why he was riding his bicycle. He told Tall about his truck running like crap and that he had just dropped it off at the mechanic to get a bunch of work done. Tall neighbor told him he had made a huge mistake. He should go get the truck back before they start working on it and taking his hard earned money.

Tall neighbor also told him, with much conviction, about an esteemed ivy league institution's recent study that indicated that vehicles don't actually need maintenance. Despite the very promising sounding study, my friend said he had made his decision and that his truck was going to get fixed at the mechanic shop.

For some reason Tall neighbor didn't like my friend's decision. Tall neighbor was angry enough about it that he told my friend that if he didn't go get his truck from the mechanic shop immediately, then Tall would march around to all the other neighbors and tell them about my friend's sub-division covenant violations (my friend doesn't think he has any covenant violations, but he hasn't actually read them). So, bullied into it, my friend relented. He went down to the mechanic and got his truck back before they had started on the repairs.

As you probably can guess, the truck limped along for a few more months, but eventually it quit running altogether (in a roundabout, no less - I'm just glad it didn't happen in GARS!).

My pal later learned (in the newspaper) that the esteemed ivy league study was conducted on EVs that only rich people can afford. It wasn't really applicable to regular vehicles. Oh well... Despite the

fact that Tall worked in a mechanic shop, my pal's pretty sure it was an honest mistake. It's not like anyone reads or understands those science journal studies (and since when do we trust East Coasters?). All the Facebook and X posts about the study sure seemed legit.

My pal's kids now have to walk a few more miles to/from their new charter school after their neighborhood school closed (no bussing to charters). But they are getting smarter along the way by listening to podcasts while walking. Tougher and in better shape too. With more grit. And character (like we all had growing up). So that's a win.

There is some additional good news to the story: my pal is currently in good spirits and isn't too bummed about his current lack of transportation. He read about the \$50M seed money for the Alaska gas line. He's sure his troubles will be over when he sells his property for a hefty profit during gas line construction. After all, it is in one of Fairbanks best school districts (Pearl Creek). [Eventually I'll break the news that Pearl Creek Elementary is slated for closure to him. I really will. But I don't want to ruin his current good vibes. Any suggestions? Wait til the next big AK gas line progress announcement?]

I think there's a lesson in there somewhere. If not for us adults, at least for the kids.

Thank you for your service to Alaska.

Luke Boles

Fairbanks

Michael Mason

From: Mandy Lehm <amandalehm623@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 11:27 AM
To: House Education
Cc: Senate Education; Rep. Sarah Vance; Rep. Sarah Vance; Sen. Gary Stevens
Subject: Public Testimony in Support of HB69

Dear Chair Tobin, Co-Chairs Himschoot and Story, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mandy Lehm, and I am a parent of a first grader and a soon-to-be kindergartner in Alaska's public school system. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 69, which increases the Base Student Allocation (BSA) by \$1,000 this year and an additional \$404 for the next two years. This funding is essential to ensuring our public schools can provide a high-quality education in a safe and effective learning environment.

Right now, our public schools are facing devastating budget shortfalls that could lead to school closures and class sizes nearing 35 students per classroom. This is not a conducive learning environment, especially for young children. Teachers are already stretched thin, and overcrowded classrooms mean less individualized attention, more behavioral challenges, and a decline in educational quality. If we want our children to thrive, we must give public schools the resources they need to succeed.

Alaska's future depends on a strong public education system. A well-funded public school system benefits not just students but also our communities and economy. It helps retain great teachers, supports working families, and ensures every child—regardless of their background—has access to the education they deserve.

I urge you to support HB 69 and make a meaningful commitment to Alaska's public schools. Our children's future depends on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Mandy Lehm
Homer, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Margo Bellamy <margobellamy2@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 9:32 AM
Subject: Support for HB 69: Alaska's Education Funding Crisis

Greetings!

My name is Margo Bellamy, and I am a member of the Anchorage School Board and a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Alaska School Boards(AASB). Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 69.

I write to you with a heightened sense of urgency asking for your thoughtful consideration and immediate action to increase the BSA... not just for students in the Anchorage School District, but for every student in the State of Alaska ...all of whom deserves the best education possible from highly qualified teachers, in schools that are safe, clean, physically/emotionally warm, academically engaging and offer tremendous academic choices and opportunities.

Years of underfunding public education, compounded by years of unaddressed inflation, has lead to a critical and dire education funding crisis for Alaska's public schools. For ASD, this means that we are facing a \$111 million structural deficit for FY2026. To address this deficit, ASD is once again faced with draining its emergency reserves and implementing significant cuts to programs, services, and staff – choices that will impact student outcomes and undercut our current efforts to implement our goals and guardrails.

The impending cuts to staffing, programs and services will be devastating to our students and staff and we cannot consistently provide quality opportunities if we can't retain our current educators and support staff; if we are forced to increase our class sizes; or eliminate or reduce special programs and services such as gifted education, Language Immersion, and Art! I urge your swift action to pass and fund a permanent increase to the BSA....please pass HB 69!

Sincerely,

Margo Bellamy
Member, Anchorage School Board
Member, AASB, Board of Directors
Member, CGCS, Executive Board

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Marta Kumle -formerly Krynytzky- <m.krynytzky@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2025 9:43 AM
To: House Education; Senate Education; Sen. James Kaufman; Rep. Julie Coulombe; Rep. Mia Costello
Subject: Please support HB69!

Hello,

I am writing to urge you to please vote for HB69, we need to secure funding for our schools.

Anchorage has such a rich diversity of schools and quality programs that are in jeopardy without adequate funding. Please save our immersion programs and many other school programs through out the state that are critical for the future of Alaska, an Alaskan workforce, Alaskan businesses, and society.

Please invest in our future by funding our schools. School funding levels has fallen way behind inflation and we need to increase school spending to maintain quality programs throughout the state. Quality education is paramount in investing in Alaska's future.

Sincerely,
Marta Kumle

Sent from Gmail Mobile

Michael Mason

From: Meadow Muench <meadowmuench@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2025 11:16 AM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: House Bill 69 (HB69)

To Whom it may concern,

I'm writing to show my support for House Bill 69 (HB69). We desperately need to increase the Base Student Allocation. As I'm sure you are aware, schools around the State are closing, and here in Ketchikan, we are facing a consolidation of the elementary schools. By not increasing the BSA, we are not prioritizing children and families. Families with children who can relocate are already starting to leave, and we are not attracting new families to Alaska. According to the newly published report on nonresidents working in Alaska, the number of non-residents working in Alaska has steadily increased since 2020. It will continue to increase if our working-age population relocates. To build Alaska's future, we need families and children. Please pass HB69 and support our Alaskan families!

Thank you,
Meadow Muench

Michael Mason

From: Meghan Redmond <MRedmond@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 7:04 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support of HB 69

My name is Meghan Redmond. I am the principal of Homer Middle School in Homer, Alaska, but I am also a parent of 4 young children that I want to have the best future possible. I have been a teacher, assistant principal, and principal both on and off the road system in Alaska for the past 15 years. I am writing today in support of HB 69.

Our schools are facing rapidly rising costs in energy, transportation, health care, food service, and so much more. As those costs that are mostly out of our control rise through the roof and our funding remains flat, our districts are forced to find cuts that directly impact the classroom through cuts in staffing. As a principal, when I have to cut staffing, I am faced with an impossible decision of what opportunities to cut for my students or how big to make classes. I am forced to make decisions that I know are not best practices for student learning, when my original plan for next school year was to be moving the completely opposite direction. I can speak from experience that the things everyone calls “extra” are most often the things that get motivate kids to get to school so that they can also get our core instruction.

We need stable, long term, and predictable funding for our schools to be able to focus on long term school improvement, and to retrain and recruit excellent educators to our schools. Being a teacher is hard, being a teacher in Alaska is even harder. We have amazing, dedicated teachers in our state. but when our jobs are constantly on the chopping block due to possible budget cuts that year after year are stayed off temporarily by one-time funding outside the BSA, eventually the amazing teachers we have will have had enough. And I can tell you from personal experience in hiring teachers in Alaska for the past 15 years that we will not be able to replace them.

Our teachers deserve reasonable job expectations. We constantly ask our schools and our teachers to do more and more with less and less every year to the point that being a teacher is an impossible job.

We need stable, long-term funding for our schools. This will make an immediate improvement in the education of Alaska’s children.

Last year, you heard the public testimony and the stories. You worked together with the rest of the legislators and found a compromise that nearly ALL of you agreed to. Last year’s bill going to law would have made it so that we don’t have to go through this awful process again and again just to staff our schools adequately. We aren’t asking for a BSA increase to build ourselves a castle. We just want to ensure that every time our electric bill or the costs for insurance or the price of fuel to run our school buses increases, we don’t have to make impossible decisions that inevitably take away opportunities for our students.

Thank you taking the time to read my email. Thank you for all you do. You have an impossibly difficult job that I could never do, so please know you are appreciated!

Meghan Redmond
Homer, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: joelmmckinney <joelmmckinney@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 5:50 PM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: No On 69.

My name is Joel Michael McKinney

I am not speaking on behalf of District 16

I am opposed to HB 69

This legislation will cause inflation

Anyone that says it will be "inflation proof" doesn't understand economics whatsoever.

It is, however a testament on how well they were educated.

I also don't think government employees like principals, school board memebbers, and teachers should be allowed to comment or vote on this.

Self licking ice cream cone.

6th highest budget in the nation.

2nd from the lowest performing.

(With the exception of charter schools)

Thank you for your time.

Michael Mason

From: Misty Peterkin <mistypeterkin@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 8:27 AM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: Oppose HB69

My name is Misty Peterkin, and I am from Nikiski, on the Kenai Peninsula. I am speaking for myself. I oppose this bill. We need to improve policies that will also lead to better outcomes.

We need more charter schools. Alaska has fallen behind in all education aspects except charter schools. Despite increased demand, only a few have been authorized in the past few years. Students in Alaska's charter schools performed better than those in traditional public schools, regardless of ethnicity or gender.

Adding money to a one-size-fits-all system is not the solution Alaska students need. We need to fund students, not the administration.

Thank you,
Misty Peterkin

Michael Mason

From: Molly Naaktgeboren <mcnaaktgeboren@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 2:00 PM
To: House Education
Cc: Rep. Neal Foster; Senate Education; Sen. Donny Olson
Subject: School Funding in Nome Alaska

Good afternoon,

I am excited to see that on the docket this week is school funding. As an educator myself, and mother to two children in the school system, I wholeheartedly support HB 69 to increase the BSA as it has not changed in many years with inflation and has already impacted the Nome Public School system in a negative way. This includes inadequate teaching supplies, teachers leaving the profession for other more profitable positions, and the school district paying thousands in visas / housing to hire teachers from the Philippines.

One of the third grade teachers had dinner at my house a few weeks ago and commented on the magnet tiles my children had, how they wished their classroom had such wonderful tactile toys that inspire creative thinking. A classroom set does not cost more than \$200, but that one comment really spoke to me about lack of funding for student needs and how much teachers are paying out of pocket to enrich their own classrooms from their own salaries.

I urge you to think of the impact that increasing the allotment per student would have on our children's future and vote to increase this amount.

Thank you,

M. Naaktgeboren
Resident of Nome, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Molly E Odell <odellmolly@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 10:18 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB-69 Testimony

Dear Members of the Senate,

I am writing as a parent and community member in Kodiak, my hometown. I attended public school for Kindergarten through 12th grade in Kodiak, and my two children are now in public school. Our local school district is in dire financial straits almost completely due to the state's flat funding of public education. The lack of BSA increase while inflation has risen 30% has crippled our school district. I urge you to support HB-69 and increase the BSA. Our children, teachers, and communities deserve the best education we can give them. Our district has trouble recruiting and retaining qualified teachers due to low teacher salaries, high cost of living, the housing shortage in Kodiak, and burn out. Increasing the BSA will allow our district to increase teacher salaries and retain and recruit more qualified teachers. Our district just made the heart wrenching decision to close one of our four elementary schools. The district is looking at much larger class sizes next year as another way to save money. We know that class size is a very important factor in student success and teacher retention. Passing HB-69 will allow our school districts to address some of the shortages that are leading to low teacher retention/recruitment and large class sizes.

Thank you for supporting this bill.

Molly Odell
Kodiak, AK
206-321-4629

Michael Mason

From: Nate Beck <beck.nj@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 12:23 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Urgent Action on Education Funding

Dear Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to urge your strong support for increased education funding in Alaska by advancing Senate Bill 46 and/or House Bill 69. These critical and urgently needed pieces of legislation are necessary to ensure our schools receive the resources they need to provide a quality education to Alaska's children. Education is not just an investment in our students—it is an investment in the future of our state.

As you know, inflation has severely impacted the purchasing power of our schools, eroding their ability to provide essential services, retain quality educators, and maintain safe and effective learning environments. The Base Student Allocation has remained largely stagnant for years, failing to keep pace with rising costs. Without meaningful increases, schools are forced to cut programs, increase class sizes, and struggle to recruit and retain qualified teachers. These challenges directly harm students and jeopardize the long-term success of our communities.

Furthermore, a well-funded education system is crucial for attracting and retaining young professionals in Alaska. Families considering putting down roots in our state weigh the quality of public education heavily in their decisions. Without strong schools, we risk losing talented individuals and skilled workers to states that prioritize education. This is a concern that deeply affects my own family—we want to continue living and working in Alaska, but the quality of education available to our children is a major factor in whether we can realistically stay. A failure to act on education funding threatens not only our children's future but also our workforce and economy.

Additionally, proposed budget cuts threaten the viability of Alaska's language immersion programs. With the Anchorage School District set to lose 12 FTE positions next year, these specialized programs—which require small class sizes and highly qualified teachers—face potential collapse. Once lost, these programs would be nearly impossible to rebuild, depriving students of unique language learning opportunities and diminishing Alaska's cultural and linguistic diversity. Without a BSA increase, secondary immersion programs will also be at risk, further limiting educational opportunities for our students.

I urge you to support legislation such as SB 46 and HB 69 and to advocate for sustainable, inflation-proof education funding. The time to act is now. The future of Alaska depends on the strength of our schools, and that strength begins with proper investment.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the people of Alaska. I look forward to your leadership on this vital issue.

Sincerely,

Nate Beck
Vice President, Koniag Energy and Water
5301 Wood Hall Dr
Anchorage, AK 99516
beck.nj@gmail.com
(907) 615-0018

Michael Mason

From: Nicole Reynolds <nreynolds@sphosp.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2025 3:11 PM
To: House Education
Cc: Senate Education; Rep. Sarah Vance; Sen. Gary Stevens; Rep. Sarah Vance
Subject: House Bill 69

Dear Chair Tobin, Co-Chairs Himschoot and Story, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nicole Reynolds, and I am the grandparent of a fourth grader, a first grader and two soon-to-be kindergartners in Alaska's public school system. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 69, which increases the Base Student Allocation (BSA) by \$1,000 this year and an additional \$404 for the next two years. This funding is essential to ensuring our public schools can provide a high-quality education in a safe and effective learning environment.

Right now, our public schools are facing devastating budget shortfalls that could lead to school closures and class sizes nearing 35 students per classroom. This is not a conducive learning environment, especially for young children. Teachers are already stretched thin, and overcrowded classrooms mean less individualized attention, more behavioral challenges, and a decline in educational quality. If we want our children to thrive, we must give public schools the resources they need to succeed.

Alaska's future depends on a strong public education system. A well-funded public school system benefits not just students but also our communities and economy. It helps retain great teachers, supports working families, and ensures every child—regardless of their background—has access to the education they deserve.

I urge you to support HB 69 and make a meaningful commitment to Alaska's public schools. Our children's future depends on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Nicole Reynolds
Homer, Alaska

Disclaimer

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Michael Mason

From: Nikole Schick <nikoles@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2025 1:55 PM
To: Senate Education; House Education
Subject: SUPPORT FOR HB 69

Good afternoon,

I reside in the Fairbanks North Star Borough and my son is a 3rd grade student at our neighborhood public school. I write today in support of HB 69. We must inflation-proof our BSA and provide our children - our future - with sustainable education funding.

I was born in Fairbanks, and educated in the public school system in both Fairbanks and Kenai. The school where I attended Kindergarten closed in 2022, and the school my son attends is on the list for closure this year. The loss of our neighborhood schools is devastating to the Fairbanks community.

Our neighborhood public school, Pearl Creek Elementary, is amazing. It is a supportive and exceptional educational community, as evidenced by its strong test scores, steady enrollment, and frequent collaboration with our nearby flagship University. My family chose to live within the Pearl Creek attendance area, and we twice purchased a home within our neighborhood with plans to send our future child(ren) to the school. Pearl Creek has been every bit as excellent as expected, despite years of funding deficits and budget cuts taking their toll on our school district. Our schools need money to provide the equitable, quality education that our State constitution demands for all Alaskan youth.

Please vote in support of HB 69 and provide Alaska's school districts with reliable, meaningful funding through a permanent BSA increase. Please also consider providing targeted funding for increased transportation costs, deferred building maintenance, and the Alaska Reads Act. Our schools need this funding to operate and continue providing the quality education that our children deserve.

Thank you for your consideration. And thank you for bringing this bill forward early in session to address the immense need for increased education funding.

Sincerely,
Nikole Schick
721 Aspen Heights Drive
Fairbanks, AK 99712

Michael Mason

From: Nikole Schick <nikoles@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 9:51 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Fwd: SUPPORT FOR HB 69

Wanted to share this update with Senate Education as well.

Thanks,
Nikole Schick

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Nikole Schick** <nikoles@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Feb 7, 2025 at 9:09 AM
Subject: Re: SUPPORT FOR HB 69
To: House Education <House.Education@akleg.gov>

Thank you.

Please pass along that, since I wrote the previous e-mail, our local school board voted to close my family's neighborhood public school (along with two others). We are now facing increased transportation times and class sizes, not to mention the fracturing of our school community as our children are split between three to four different schools. I am furious and devastated.

Our community is in crisis over the loss of three neighborhood schools and people are making plans to leave Alaska, pursue creation of new charter schools, and homeschool their children. Many parents looking to homeschool are specifically seeking programs outside of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District because they no longer want any funding tied to their children to benefit our local school district. We are in a death spiral.

I don't know what to do but, for the first time in a long time, I have given serious thought to whether my family should stay here in Alaska. My husband and I are both attorneys for the State, working in public service. He was raised in a family of educators and we are staunch advocates for real public education in neighborhood schools - the ones that provide hot meals and free transportation, as well as robust educational services to meet the needs of all students within the attendance area. I am deeply fearful of the direction our State is headed in right now. We must prioritize meaningful education funding for our neighborhood public schools through a permanent increase to the BSA. Families with young children are leaving Alaska, and will continue to leave unless we fix this immediately.

Sincerely,
Nikole Schick

On Thu, Feb 6, 2025 at 9:07 PM House Education <House.Education@akleg.gov> wrote:

Greetings,

Thank you for your interest in education funding, the Base Student Allocation (BSA), and House Bill 69, “An Act relating to education funding; and providing for an effective date”.

Your written testimony to the House Education Committee will be provided to each committee member and become a part of the permanent record.

Please contact our office if you have any questions.

Regards,

Tammy Smith

Legislative Aide/Education Committee Aide

Office of Representative Andi Story

House District 3

Alaska State Legislature

(907)465-3744

From: Nikole Schick <nikoles@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2025 1:55 PM

To: Senate Education <Senate.Education@akleg.gov>; House Education <House.Education@akleg.gov>

Subject: SUPPORT FOR HB 69

Good afternoon,

I reside in the Fairbanks North Star Borough and my son is a 3rd grade student at our neighborhood public school. I write today in support of HB 69. We must inflation-proof our BSA and provide our children - our future - with sustainable education funding.

I was born in Fairbanks, and educated in the public school system in both Fairbanks and Kenai. The school where I attended Kindergarten closed in 2022, and the school my son attends is on the list for closure this year. The loss of our neighborhood schools is devastating to the Fairbanks community.

Our neighborhood public school, Pearl Creek Elementary, is amazing. It is a supportive and exceptional educational community, as evidenced by its strong test scores, steady enrollment, and frequent collaboration with our nearby flagship University. My family chose to live within the Pearl Creek attendance area, and we twice purchased a home within our neighborhood with plans to send our future child(ren) to the school. Pearl Creek has been every bit as excellent as expected, despite years of funding deficits and budget cuts taking their toll on our school district. Our schools need money to provide the equitable, quality education that our State constitution demands for all Alaskan youth.

Please vote in support of HB 69 and provide Alaska's school districts with reliable, meaningful funding through a permanent BSA increase. Please also consider providing targeted funding for increased transportation costs, deferred building maintenance, and the Alaska Reads Act. Our schools need this funding to operate and continue providing the quality education that our children deserve.

Thank you for your consideration. And thank you for bringing this bill forward early in session to address the immense need for increased education funding.

Sincerely,

Nikole Schick

721 Aspen Heights Drive

Fairbanks, AK 99712